

August 13, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

MOTION TO SUPPORT AB 2514 (BATES) – SUBSTANCE ABUSE REVIEW COMMITTEE (ITEM NO. 43-C, AGENDA OF AUGUST 13, 2002)

Item No. 43-C on the August 13, 2002 Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Burke to join the Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Commission in support of AB 2514 (Bates) and send a five signature letter to the members of the Los Angeles County State Legislative delegation urging their support of the bill.

As amended on June 4, 2002, AB 2514 would require the State Department of Social Services (SDSS), in consultation with the State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (DADP), to establish a joint committee to study issues relating to substance abuse in families in child welfare programs. The committee would be required to develop a plan to address these issues within existing resources, and to submit the plan to the Legislature and the Governor by January 1, 2004.

AB 2514 requires the committee to be co-chaired by the Directors of SDSS and DADP, or their designees, who must appoint members from all of the following: 1) the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), 2) the County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Association of California, 3) the University of California (one representative with expertise in child welfare issues, and one representative with expertise in drug abuse issues), 4) Judicial Council of California, 5) consumers of substance abuse services, 6) an individual with personal experience with substance abuse and child welfare services, and 7) any other entity the committee deems advisable.

A recent Senate Health and Human Services Committee analysis indicates that between 40 percent and 70 percent of the families entering the child welfare system have substance abuse problems. A 1999 study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse found that parental substance abuse and addiction are the underlying cause in at least 70 percent, and perhaps 90 percent, of all child welfare spending. The study also found that timely and comprehensive treatment can work for substance-abusing parents, and that such treatment is cost effective.

The author indicates in the Committee analysis that there is no mechanism currently in place to collect information and outcomes about cases that involve the courts, child welfare agencies, and treatment agencies. The author adds that the bill is not intended to simply study the problem, but to develop a strategic plan to address the problem by better preparing State and local agencies to respond to the devastating effects of substance abuse on children and families.

SDSS expressed concern at a recent CWDA meeting that AB 2514 creates an unmanageable workload for the Department. Further, the purpose and intent of the bill are already part of the mission of the Child Welfare Stakeholders Group, which includes DAPD in its membership.

The County Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Commission, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) recommend that the County support AB 2514 because it is critical to address the substance abuse problem among families in the child welfare system with a strategic plan of action, and we concur. The Department of Public Social Services further indicates that the Committee formed by AB 2514 will bring focus to possible effective treatment alternatives which will assist in the reunification of families. The Department of Health Services Alcohol and Drug Program Administration also supports the bill. **Therefore, we are recommending support of this bill.**

AB 2514 is sponsored by Children and Family Futures and supported by the California Alliance of Child and Family Services, California Coalition for Youth, California Society of Addiction Medicine, California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives, and the Mental Health Association of California. There is no registered opposition.

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AB 2514 is awaiting consideration on the Senate Floor.

DEJ:GK
MS:md

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel
 County Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Commission
 Department of Children and Family Services
 Department of Health Services
 Department of Public Social Services